

Editorial: The digital virus called fake news

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This year, the adage that “falsehood flies and the truth comes limping after it” doesn’t begin to describe the problem. That idea assumes that the truth eventually catches up. There’s not much evidence of this happening for the millions of people taken in by the fake news stories – like Pope Francis endorsing Donald Trump or Mr. Trump pulling ahead of Hillary Clinton in the popular vote – that have spread on social media sites.

Most of the fake news stories are produced by scammers looking to make a quick buck. The vast majority of them take far-right positions. But a big part of the responsibility for this scourge rests with internet companies like Facebook and Google, which have made it possible for fake news to be shared nearly instantly with millions of users and have been slow to block it from their sites.

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